

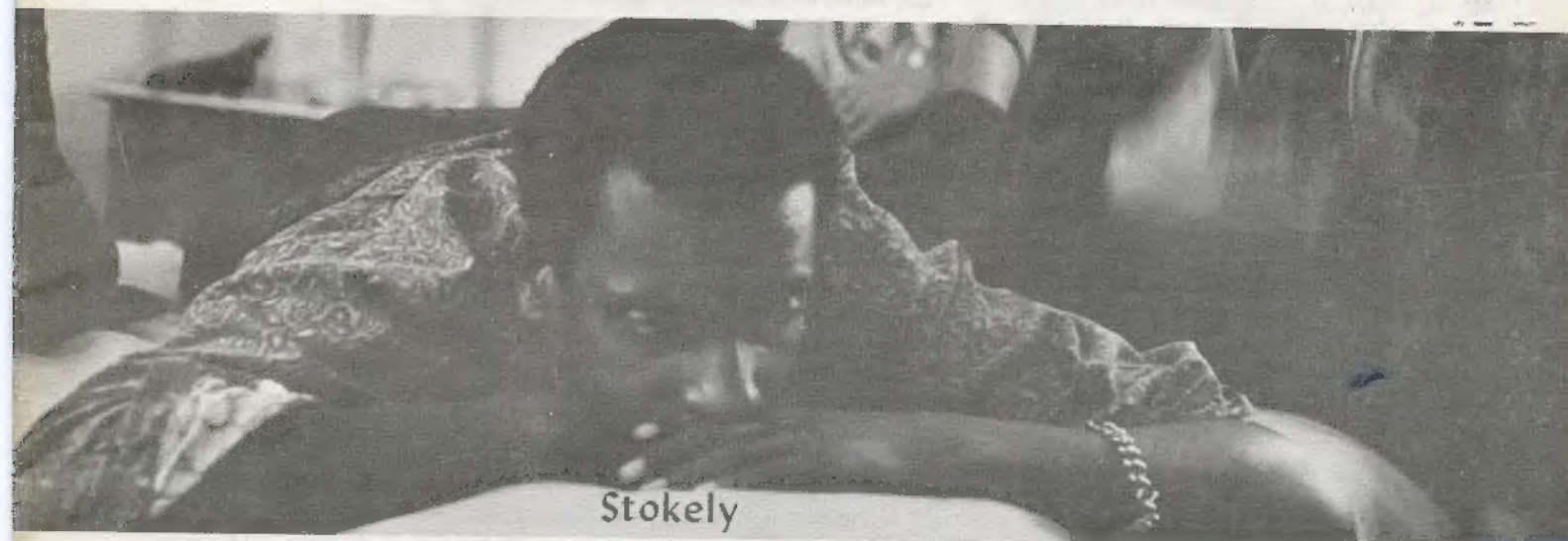
# LIBERATOR

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Vol. 9 No. 9

SEPTEMBER 1969 35c

## The Carmichael/Cleaver Debate Editorial



Stokely

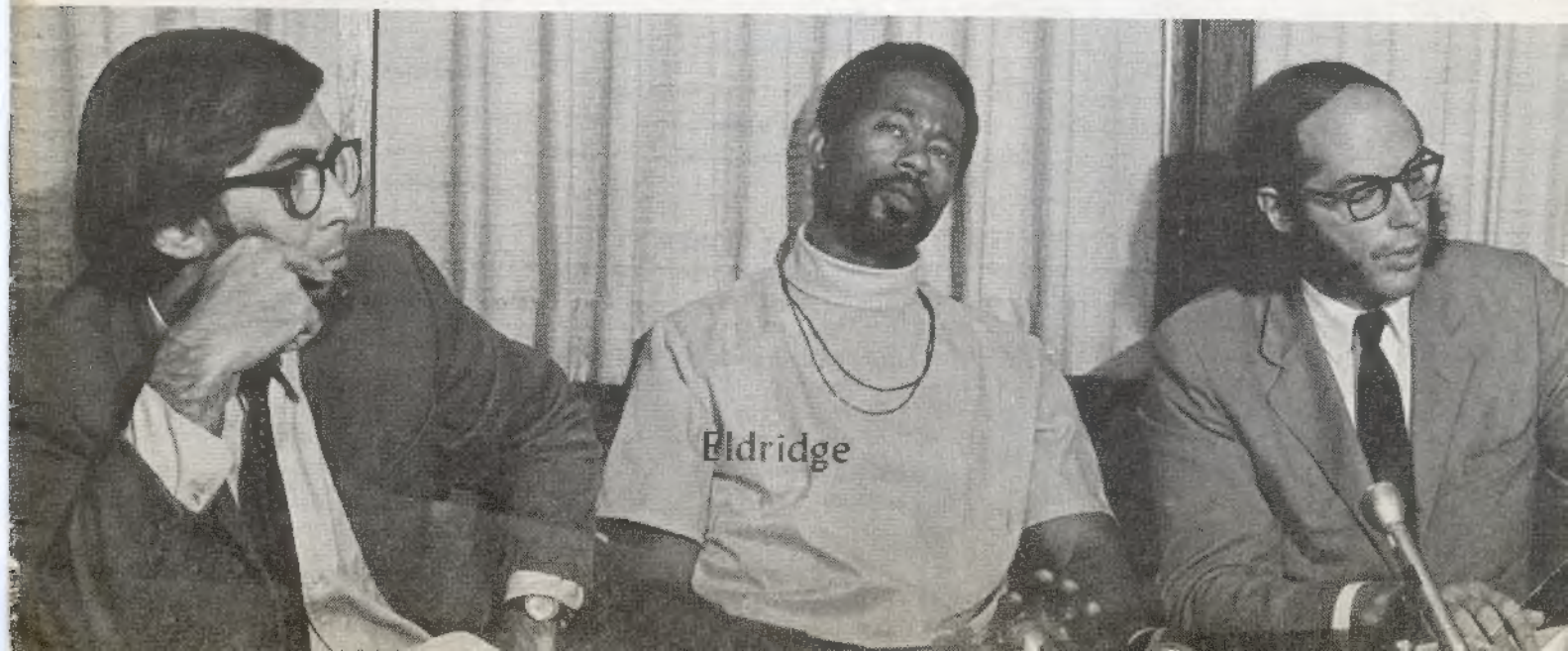
New Year's Eve at Yale

Needed: A Black Studies Consortium

Marxism and the Black Revolution

Theatre Review

CLAYTON RILEY



Eldridge



# LIBERATOR

Vol 9 No 9 September 1969

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**LIBERATOR** is published monthly by the Afro-American Research Institute, Inc. 244 East 46 Street, New York, N. Y., 10017

**Subscription Prices:** Within Continental United States:

Single Copy: 35¢, 1 year \$3.00  
2 years \$5.50

Foreign surface Mail: 1 year \$6.00

Foreign air mail: 1 year \$13.00

All manuscripts, letters, subscription orders, changes of address should be sent to **LIBERATOR**, 244 East 46 Street, N.Y., N.Y., 10017  
Tel: YUkon 6-5939, area code 212  
Advertising Rates Sent Upon Request



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# The Carmichael / Cleaver Debate

Once again the Afro-American community is being subjected to that ancient and irrelevant debate of how Black is Black. Almost fifty years ago, Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois, out of ego and at the urging of his white socialist friends, expended a great deal of energy in attacking and denouncing Marcus Garvey for holding much the same philosophy as himself -- i.e., "Africa for the Africans, Asia for the Asiatics, and Europe for the Europeans." Dr. Du Bois was ably assisted then by the dean of shuffle-along porters and redcaps, and negro professional Black militant baiter, A. Phillip Randolph. For the record, Dr. Du Bois -- deserted by his white communist friends -- was hauled off to jail in handcuffs for allegedly heading up a subversive World Peace Congress, then eventually went to Africa where he died in 1963 in Ghana. In one of those curious notes of irony in history, Marcus Garvey died in London in 1940 without ever having set foot on African soil. Indeed, four of the major leaders of the Pan-African Movement of the last fifty years (Paul Robeson, Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey and George Padmore) were born outside the continent of Mother Africa. And it is Africa's exiles who most adamantly continue to nurture the dream of a unified and strong Africa today.

Stokely Carmichael, former chairman of SNCC, and Eldridge Cleaver, author and spokesman for the Black Panthers, are now repeating this scenario of fifty years ago. According to published reports, Cleaver accuses Carmichael of being "paranoid about white control of Black organizations...and being ignorant of the revolutionary process." Carmichael in turn accuses the Panthers and Cleaver of being "dogmatic, dishonest, vicious and in collusion with whites" and says that he Carmichael (born on the island of Trinidad) is planning to work as a Pan Africanist for the liberation of Africa. Most of these statements, taken on face value, contain some measure of truth. But what is being ignored by both brothers, of course, is that 25,000,000 Americans of African descent have been left without programs or leaders. Each of the brothers has shown qualities of leadership, but alas, by and large, neither has given himself time to fully develop his potential.

Cleaver must certainly have questioned his and the Panthers' position when Uncle Roy of the NAACP leaped into the debate to support their side. Acrobatic Roy, having lost his well-earned title of chief nigger of all the negroes with big Charley, and on the look-out for a chance to shuffle his way back into Charlie's good graces, raised his voice on behalf of Cleaver and integration and working with whites.

Carmichael's charge that Cleaver is pro-white is certainly absurd and downright contradictory in view of his own pandering to white Americans. With the help of Charles Hamilton, Stokely indulged in the financially lucrative business of catering to the wishes of the white mobocracy by coauthoring a tract called *Black Power* in order to capitalize on the slogan Black Power. The book had very little in the way of either programs or viable solutions for Afro-Americans and was obviously written with the white community as its chief market in mind.

Cleaver on the otherhand appears to be ignorant of the long history of sell-outs by the white left of Black militants. Paul Robeson (like hundreds more) put his career on the line (and saw it destroyed) when he openly defied the late Senator Joseph McCarthy in the 50's while his white liberal comrades mouthed the usual bit about freedom and made their deals with the establishment. Many of these

cont on pg 5





**FREE THE BLACK PANTHERS**

THE EVIL SYSTEM  
Arose and Throve  
AND THE TRADE IN  
TO ITS END WITH  
BLACK PEOPLE.

**GET OUT  
OF  
VIETNAM  
NOW**

BRING THE  
GI'S  
HOME  
NOW

美帝国主义从地

TOTAL UN  
WITH  
OF ALL

**FREE**





Carmichael/Cleaver debate cont.

"...there is no one who stands  
a better chance to destroy a Black  
revolutionary group than a white-  
romanticist revolutionary."

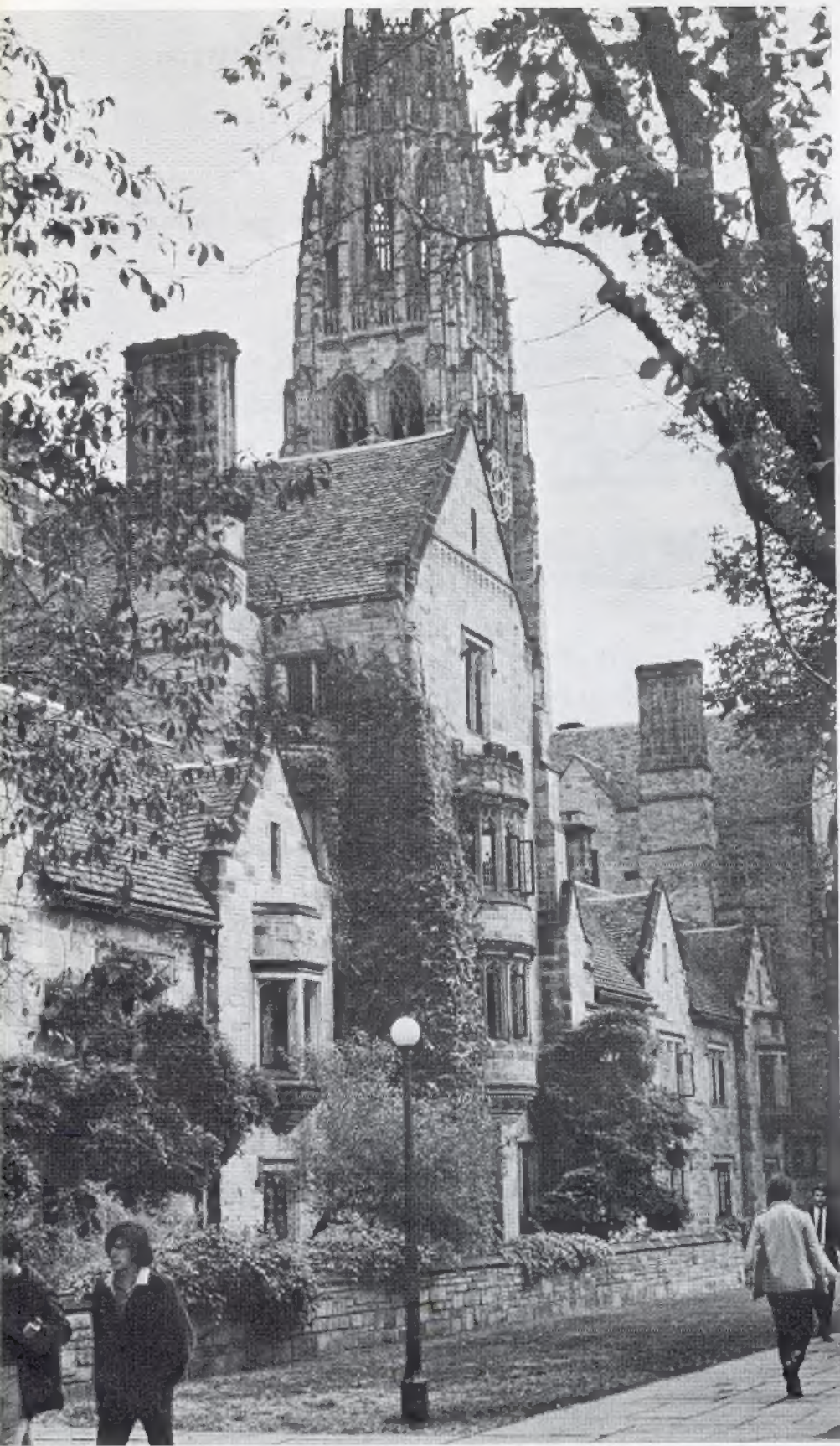
same cop-out specialists, these "limousine liberals," today are earning in excess of \$100,000 per year advising the establishment on the so-called negro's urban problems. At the recent Panther conference in Oakland more than 90% of those in attendance were white. This fact has not been lost on either the Black community or the white establishment. Good brothers, you have got to be doing something wrong.

Stokely is displaying the same capacity for ignorance by ignoring the realities of contemporary African history when he speaks of his remaining in Africa to work for its liberation. The fifteen or sixteen coups and the countless political assassinations that have taken place in Mother Africa in the last five years have brought grief and sorrow to many of us who worked and dreamed of a unified Africa from the Mediterranean to the Cape. But we must also remember that it was the parliament of an African state (Kenya) which less than a year ago expressed *its own kind of brotherhood* toward Afro-Americans by refusing to pass a law granting automatic citizenship to all Afro-Americans on the grounds that African slaves taken during the slave-trading period did not come from "East Africa." This example of "pure African logic" manifested itself recently in the brutal assassination of Tom Mboya. And as to the use of this "logic" on the international level, I personally witnessed many scenes in the North Delegate Lounge of the United Nations in which African delegates were openly bought and paid for by neo-colonialist spokesmen. In fact, it became a rule that if an African Ambassador delivered a particularly strong anti-colonialist speech in the General Assembly he was merely upping his price for the sell-out. Little wonder that former President Nkrumah of Ghana encountered so much difficulty in realizing his plans for a unified Mother Africa.

Stokely, Eldridge...the survival for 25,000,000 Americans of African descent is here in the other USA, not in Africa. Returning "home" to Africa as an individual solution to the racism encountered in America is fine, but unfortunately Africa today is neither psychologically, politically or economically ready to absorb millions of Afro-Americans. We must, then, get it together here, and any argument, whether public or private, over the ancient riddle of how Black is Black is thus pure folly indeed. For in reality, as long as we continue to live, to work and be financially dependent upon white Americans and white institutions, none of us can argue with any degree of logic about whether white America is or should be involved in the affairs of Afro-Americans. What we should be debating is our order of priorities: (1) if we choose to leave the USA, then we must prepare our "Noah's Ark" and plot our course as to where we want to resettle; (2) if we wish to remain here in the USA, we must decide which institutions to build to guarantee our survival; and perhaps most important of all, (3) we must stop massaging our egos with dreams of glory and bullshitting with each other, for the establishment peeped our game long ago -- that is why they are taking care of business while we are still trying to discover what our business is.

--- DANIEL H. WATTS





by HOUSTON A. BAKER

It turned very cold in December, 1968; all at once it was time for hats and gloves. The lights had been up since Thanksgiving, and downtown stores stayed open late. Everyone was winding down with thoughts of home, while the Christmas myth was perpetuated for yet another season: a little white boy whose parents were crowded out and had to spend the night in a stable while white angels sang and wise men danced out of the desert bearing gifts. *Joy to the world.*

Martin Luther King was dead. Bobby Kennedy had been cut down. George Wallace had drawn huge crowds all over the country. The

# new at

Vietnam casualty list was swelling again. And a reticent Richard Nixon was President-elect. *Peace on earth; good will to man.*

There is a proportion of evil in every year, but people looked for balances at this time, and, in at least one instance, found none. New Year's Eve was a gray day, and there was a solemn stillness all about the college. There was an air of waiting which I had felt in Washington, D.C., New York, and finally in New Haven. No one seemed to be unabashedly drunk anywhere we went, and few people seemed to want to look forward. Even the very young people who came to my parents'



house in Washington had no effervescence. "You are growing older," I told myself. And that did for a short while. But you can't just keep on drinking the blood-red wine and slighting the issues. People were waiting; I was waiting; the country was waiting. And to realize for what was to realize with a shudder: we were all awaiting the holocaust of some final enmity. But beyond that apprehension of the approaching holocaust, there was an awareness everywhere I went. People knew more. And the most reassuring, the most comforting bits of wisdom were those in the hands of Black people.

At the Drum and Spear Bookshop

a longing, and an extreme discomfort on the part of the white men I met. Somehow it seemed to me that we were more inhuman than ever to them now; in those seemingly far-removed passive days, they could at least sympathize and lend a liberal hand and perhaps even a dollar or two. Now, there was nowhere for them to turn but into the breach with hopes that they could catch up after all these years. I really felt like a foreigner confronted by the Yankee trader whose feigned interest is so obviously a means toward exploitation that one can only push him gently aside with a cliché or two. The amazing thing was that they

complimented each other on their new acquisition. They knew they needed Blackness, and I knew that they could not have mine.

At the Drum and Spear and at the barber shop, it felt good to know that they would go a long way to find anyone willing to give up that row of dark books or that one magazine for a sacrificial role in a "new world" of their making. It was not that one took joy in the absence of another, immediate Black man for the positions offered; one took joy in knowing that the context would be defined and pre-shaped by any Black man who took either position. The employee, the occupant would be the

# year's eve yale

in Washington, people stood in lines to get to the section of Black literature they wanted to see. At the barber shop, the magazine *Black Dollar* passed from hand to hand as each customer left his seat to have his natural trimmed. On Georgia Avenue, there was a recently established African imports shop, and everywhere the word "Black" was on the lips of bustling, stern-faced men. This, one knew, was the real thing. This was a return of dignity and a feeling of pride in the inescapable "Black Thing" that has always been here.

All of this activity and pride, however, was balanced by a remorse,

stumbled backward with an embarrassed blush and, in some instances, even admitted their intentions. More amazing still was the fact that after admitting their intentions, they still asked that I play their game. To be offered two jobs in three weeks at one of America's most traditional institutions must be a record, especially when one already has one job in that same institution. Nevertheless, there it was; they wanted my Blackness as a veil to shut out the glimmering fires in the distance. And I was supposed to contort myself into a Maltese cross and play the role, while behind this facade they comfortably pulled on their pipes and

director of his own drama and not the lamb on the altar, and he would be doing a Black Thing. In short, it would be a totally human event if it occurred.

The tragedy was that "they" never realized how radical the shift was; they were still Noahs, so to speak, pricking and probing the animals and deciding which beast should enter and how he should enter. They never realized that no one was knocking; no one was begging for salvation in a "new world" of their making. They never saw that they were now like the host who has to shift his setting, arrange the music, and make the whole thing right and

cont next pg



then proceed to find the proper way to ask in the guests. And as Chekhov said in one of his plays, "they aren't too happy to come" unless the setting is exactly right. There are fewer and fewer ultra-dedicated horses who will say "I will work harder" as the pigs grow in power. Behind the term "Black Power" lies a whole vista of humanity -- the knowledge that one is a viable, palpitating, discriminating human being with the ability to choose one's own destiny and define one's own alternatives. No one can dictate or play games with the person

bring off his plans. And the Dean never understood why the students were so offended by the drama; as he said, "A committee of twelve read the play, and *we* all thought it was all right." The committee of twelve, of course, included not a single Black man or woman.

The issue grew in scope, and pretty soon the words "academic freedom" and "censorship" were being bandied around as though they really meant or explained something in the total controversy. No one, including the eminent personage in the Dean's chair, seemed to realize

them further choices that he and his entourage had made without ever consulting them. Of course, this was unacceptable.

All of the Black people involved in the controversy had glimpsed that vista behind the simple term "Black Power." As a result, there is now a deadlock; the issue has gone nowhere. The play was withdrawn by the author, because he "did not want his play to be used by factions," as he told the director. The list of demands which the students drew up is still, as far as they are concerned, unanswered. The game simply cannot

## "We wait for the flame of purgation which will rust and corruption of a society that is no

who has projected himself into that vista. But they still try.

The Dean of the drama school at Yale (a rather eminent personage), for example, tried to play the game on his own antiquated terms with a group of drama students and several young faculty members just before the holiday season. The third presentation of the drama school was to be a mediocre play which projected three black-bared and leather-jacketed men as the current type of the Black man -- the "let's-destroy-the-whole-thing" idiot who needs the support of a white drug addict to

that when one has had no voice in the selection of materials it is not censorship to refuse to accept those materials. It is simply not human to accept that which offends one secondarily, and which one has had no say about originally. But the idea of the drama students and the young faculty members as real, viable, discriminating human beings was simply outside the ken of the Dean and the entourage he assembled around him. He even went so far as to write a letter to "you black students," which attempted to define all the alternatives and to foist upon

be played when everybody does not understand the rules.

The Dean and his coterie are still breaking all the rules of the more universal game; they are intent on playing a limited, evilly defined game of their own making. The *New York Times* did as objective a story as they could on the whole thing, and the Dean took off for the Bahamas for a Christmas vacation after sending out a letter to the subscription audience of the drama school, a letter which said that the Black students were responsible for the cancellation of the performance for



which the subscription audience had paid its hard-earned money. Prior to that, the Dean had made an emotional speech to a group of drama students telling them that they were all emotionally childish and that anarchy and dissolution were raising their ugly heads. He condemned them all, but they took him to mean (as he probably did) the Black students, and about two-thirds of the audience applauded. For the first time, I understood what the Hitler regime was all about. Brand one group animals, make them sacrificial victims, establish a focal center for

the waiting and apprehension are not contradistinct from the awareness that has come to all people and especially that very particular awareness that has come to Black people. We are all waiting for the apocalyptic stars to fall and the apocalyptic fires to appear, because we know that the time has come when the old verities of a racist society can no longer obtain. That society pre-supposed Black animals, indiscriminate, slimy creatures who could be moulded into the shape and form that pleased society.

Today, it is not the naturals, nor the new interest in Black literature, nor the garments worn that are important. What is important is the glimpse that Black people have had of that vista behind "Black Power," that corridor lined with an invaluable humanity. We wait for the flame of purgation which will burn away the rust and corruption of a society that is no longer viable; they wait for someone to sit down and explain to them the rules of the new, human, universal game, rules that can never be "explained." The impasse seems to promise tragedy, and the cold, still gray of that New Year's holiday season and the calamities of the past year seem but auguries of the infamies that are to follow. The element of hope is in the way that Black people will meet the crouching beast; we can now dictate the manner of the struggle, and we can take pride in knowing that the element of humanity lies with us. The low murmurings and the inarticulate insensitivity to how the game must now be played on the other side tell us as much.

hatred, and then play the game singly with power well in hand.

The beautiful thing, of course, is that there are no more sacrificial victims among Black people -- all are cognizant and viable, and that makes it much more like murder than a sacrosanct ceremony. The corridor lined with Black artifacts and impregnated with what a friend of mine called the "Black mist" has been entered by most, and the entrance has been one into humanity.

People are waiting; I am waiting; the whole country is waiting for the holocaust, the fire next time. And

## The Spectacle

*for niggas  
with no minds*

South corner. trees  
& rocks. Us waiting.  
bazookas up.

West corner. boxes  
& barricades. Panthers waiting.  
mortars in a row.

North corner. foxholes  
& ditches. CORE waiting.  
grenades in a pyramid.

East corner. camouflage  
& dirt hills. Others waiting.  
carbines pointing.

Waiting. waiting. Darkies waiting  
to strike malicious blows  
at other darkies

while the honkies  
(in Roman armor  
and greased Tanks)

ready ONE  
HUNDRED THOUSAND  
battalions

(troops  
in the first  
wave)

to sweep down  
& enter the  
arena...

--- Isaac J. Black

burn away the  
longer viable."



## carthage resurrected

violent laughter smashes blackly  
against the pink cheeks of the  
hate face  
i know no mercy  
pain scars the prisoners of  
freedom some escape yet exodus  
is not the answer  
the stagnant shadows of enigma  
shroud the streets of pain  
that the dead will go on living  
& the blind will go on seeing  
is only truth  
the morality cancer grows daily  
as armageddon & the dishwashers  
convention are planned for the  
same day  
the stained glass store front  
beckons bringing all who enter  
promises of paradise & the gift  
of self hate  
spiritual scavengers hustle the  
faceless alones & peddle glass  
beads of compassion as organ music  
fractures the ears  
how few may hear reality screaming  
man woman child are found weirdly  
bound in the death house psycho  
drama of the streets  
beauty beauty savage beauty denies  
the hot comb & the almost absolute  
viking can the brown eyed black  
woman love me and hate herself  
tell her the wool is most beautiful

education is only the overseer in  
disguise so who can save scholarly  
sambo from the buffoonery of non  
black men  
frantic socrates drinks hemlock greedily  
displays militancy as a consumer  
commodity but the daily news is winning  
as the eclipsed dreams of the undoubtedly  
dead filter thru my head i can only  
wonder what fool brought the sacred  
brotherhood myth to america to be  
butchered by the nearly dead everyday  
people ballot justice is a joke  
now the fire burns the yoke as the  
cinder faced children of cain refuse  
to lose tomorrow  
power power painful maybe god of men  
has banished the ragged justice clown  
who can deny the lie must die the  
witch must burn as all blacks learn  
that cicero illinois & every town  
usa are identical  
in some distant tomorrow sun  
a touch will be enough but  
now only anger rages as the  
oppression echo approaches  
on the outlaw horse of course  
all are forced further from me  
gratefully as driving sorrow  
arrives early with birth brittle  
morning spreading the futility  
light that all may bathe in death....

--- JOSEPH R. UBILES, JR.





Bethesda Fountain: the crossroads.

## A Sunday in Central Park

photos by DANIEL H. WATTS









A forced ending . . .





# NEEDED: A Black Studies

by Selwyn R. Cudjoe

Throughout the country, Black students are demanding the setting up of Black Studies programs\*, and for the most part university administrations have responded in good faith by initiating programs leading to undergraduate degrees in Afro-American Studies. Harvard and Columbia University are in the process of beginning such programs; Fordham, Wesleyan, and many other universities have increased the number of Black-oriented studies.

The problem that most of these universities are now facing or will be facing in the future is the lack of trained, qualified faculty in Afro-American Studies. Not a single university in this country offers a graduate program at this time in Afro-American Studies, and only one, Cornell, has announced plans to develop even a limited program in this area in the near future. Clearly, without a comprehensive program at the graduate level to produce the necessary faculty, and forced to depend on the precious few self-trained brothers who have done their homework, most universities will be able to offer only a mediocre program at the undergraduate level, and virtually no program at the graduate level.

How, then, is this problem to be solved? What is the most logical and practical way to utilize the available resources and create a rich oasis of highly trained professionals?

A Black university is not the answer if only because a Black university per se is a misnomer if it is concerned with merely "plumbing the depths of Black consciousness" by

offering courses in Black Studies exclusively. The Black experience is only a part of the total human experience and should be treated as such. A university must concern itself with the full spectrum of studies in the sciences and the arts. Anthropology, sociology, psychology, mathematics, chemistry, and all the related disciplines do not lend themselves to color variations; as tools, they help to unravel and make difficult concepts meaningful. Universities are neither Black nor white, but places where certain facts are straightened out and new knowledge is acquired and disseminated for the enrichment of human life. Afro-American Studies should be an integral part of these universities.

It is not really feasible for numerous universities to set up separate graduate Black Studies programs either. There are about 240,000 Black college students. About seventy-five percent of them go to schools in the South, and an even larger percentage are at the undergraduate level. This leaves rather few Black students going into any kind of graduate work, much less Afro-American Studies. Therefore, with such a lack of students, staff, and most likely finances, it would be impractical, if not impossible, for these universities to succeed in establishing strong, worthwhile programs.

There is another alternative. A Consortium of Afro-American Studies might be set up in each major educational area of the U.S. -- New York, California, Boston, and others.

The universities in and around these areas would be what is called a "contributing university." They would all pool their resources -- financial, faculty and otherwise -- in order to fund and staff this Consortium.

The Consortium would be controlled by a Board of Directors comprised of one or two representatives from each "contributing university." It would, for the most part, be staffed by faculty on loan from the "contributing university" and who would teach one to three days and then return to their regular university. The Consortium would offer independent graduate degrees after the student had fulfilled all state requirements. Graduate students from "contributing universities" could take credits at the Consortium and be given credits at their respective universities.

This lending of faculty and the sharing of facilities is nothing new. In fact, many universities cannot obtain or provide separately the facilities they enjoy collectively. Consequently, their independent contributions have been increased. Science provides the most cogent example. At Cornell University there is a ten-billion-electron-volt synchrotron worth over \$12 million which was provided by the Federal Government. Any qualified scientist from any part of the country has access to it. It is doubtful whether Cornell acting independently could have built it.

Another example is the Brookhaven National Laboratory, operated

SDS members are looking for an issue. Like some pseudo liberals, most of them are using the urgency of the Black Studies problem as a social football to advance their own sick but often effective ideas of con-

frontation for confrontation's sake. For them, revolution is romantic. As James Reston asked in the *New York Times* of April 18, 1968: Who will inherit the destruction wrought by these students? The Black man

\*It is important to realize that Black students have disassociated themselves from most of the tactics of SDS, which in the main are more destructive than constructive. The



# Consortium

by the Associated Universities Incorporated. It is a combination of nine schools including MIT and Cornell. The staff is on loan from Associated Universities Inc., and all kinds of scientific research, particularly high energy physics, is carried on there. The nation, therefore, benefits from the collective endeavors of these sister universities.

In very much the same way a Consortium of Afro-American Studies having at its disposal the highest quality faculty could utilize the limited cadre of trained professionals from the "contributing universities" to the fullest extent.

The curriculum of the Consortium should be of utmost importance. While one must be cognizant of narrow nationalism or excessive chauvinism, the prime purpose of the Consortium should be scholarship and research. The Curriculum should include Afro-Caribbean Studies, sociology, history, literature and all other relevant studies focusing on the contributions, the hang-ups and myths of Black people in America, particularly, and the world in general.

How practical then is the development of a Consortium of Afro-American Studies? Dr. Brown, Academic Vice President of Fordham University, fearing that there will be too much pressure against such a concept, calls these proposals merely "a goal to look forward to in the future." He cites financial pressure and professional jealousy as the main obstacles in the path of such an idea. But...the future is now. This proposal becomes very practical when

---

is primarily concerned with an education and his part of the action. He is not going to be the stooge of SDS, sons of rich men who are playing games. He is hip to what they are doing.

one realizes that in the next four or five years these Afro-American Studies majors, graduating from college, may just be making the same demands at the graduate level. It is only prudent to plan for what, after all, is the necessary extension and logical outcome of present trends.

Dr. Brown also hints that the problem of decentralization vs. centralization may create a problem. Most professors dislike centralized systems because centralization of studies tend to stifle competition. Professional jealousy is fostered by a sense of acquisitiveness when each university begins to want its own Afro-American Studies Institute at the graduate level. But the naked truth is that no university is willing to pay for such an institute, or if they are, they have not so intimated.

Perhaps the greatest problem in setting up a Consortium of Afro-American Studies is the difficulty in raising funds. But fund raising need not be impossible since, after all, the Consortium is designed to save the universities large sums of money. Right now, Fordham is in financial trouble; at N.Y.U., the tuition has gone up once again. In the 1969-70 year Fordham is devoting \$150,000 to scholarships for minority groups, and about \$58,000 to begin a Black Institute, consisting of about ten courses at the undergraduate level. Cornell recently budgeted \$240,000 for the establishment of an Afro-American Studies program at the undergraduate level and a limited program at the graduate level.

It has been estimated that it would take about \$500,000 to establish a fairly decent graduate Afro-American Studies program at the graduate level at any New York university. There are about sixteen universities in New York State. If we assume that each university developed an individual Black Studies program, it would cost collectively about \$8 million, excluding any expenditures on scholarships.

If, however, each university contributed about \$200,000 each, the Consortium could have an operating budget of about \$3.2 million. The individual schools could then use

part of their savings at the undergraduate level to promote scholarships and in any other way they might see fit. Another source of money could be from foundations. In very much the same way Ford Foundation supports urban education, it might just be possible for the Foundation to contribute to the Consortium if it were placed under the aegis of urban studies.

The formation of a Consortium has many benefits and inherent advantages over the setting up of individual Afro-American Institutes by competing universities. First of all, it would function as the nucleus of Black scholarship and eventually provide faculty for universities, high schools, and other related educational operations requiring trained personnel. Also, having the best available faculty, the academic repute of the Consortium would be high, and research would be carried out under expert guidance. It would be a less costly project to the participating universities since each would be contributing less individually yet gaining more collectively. There would be less duplication of effort, too. Contributing universities would not be obliged to spend a lot of money in merely duplicating the buying of books, cataloging, seminar rooms, auditoriums and many other related facilities. The Consortium would also provide greater consolidation and coordination of effort, a greater exposure to the total Black experience, and a way of bridging the Black-white polarization that the Kerner Commission speaks about. It would create a better understanding of the Black problem and provide for the expert dissemination of knowledge.

One can expect rivalry and jealousy among academic peers; it happens in every phase of life. But one can also certainly hope that the personal ambitions of a few and intra-university rivalry would be subdued because of the overall urgency of this objective. What is offered here is the germ of an idea that could well be the answer to what is likely to be an explosive question in the next five years.



## "Racism is in itself a culture." *Frantz Fanon*

A deep Black awareness is growing and with this "enlightenment" the words "revolution" and "revolutionary" have become rampant in our poetry, the "new literature." Yet at the same time, an unfortunate confusion regarding the evolution of a permanent manifesto of our political "revolutionary" vanguard seems to be overtaking our commitment to our race. This confusion is arising precisely because Black demands and goals pose very tricky questions which transcend the aims of the Marxist revolutionary.

The Marxists claim that removal of the capitalist class automatically erases racism, but history raises sharp doubts as to whether this is, in fact, true. Marx's brand of revolutionary was one pitched in a fight against property owners of his own race, and from whom he was forced to be separated merely along money lines. His was, then, essentially a homogeneous society within which, if one removed wealth differentials, class barriers did automatically evaporate.

But, although Marx lived at a time when the institution of slavery was at its apex, he failed to amply deal with the issue of Black slavery. The African worker in the New World did not fit the definition of a member of the proletariat because he was not an underpaid wage earner but one whose services were had for zero wages. His cause to overthrow his master, as exemplified by Nat Turner's revolt, could not then and can never be viewed as part of a proletariat upheaval for the share of capital ownership. His cause would be for his freedom from oppression, slavery and all its inequities.

We can only speculate, but Marx's lack of concern with slavery is probably due either to utter negligence and/or some degree of racism, for, after all, the Europe of his time was racist to the core. At any rate, the



ZANU freedom fighters training inside Rhodesia.

capitalists that he beautifully analyzed owned most of their wealth to the African slaves whose sweat produced the raw materials — sugar, cotton, tobacco, molasses, etc. — that fed Europe's industries. By taking into account only those of his own race who were not benefiting from slave production, Marx dealt with the effect rather than the cause, and his panacea does not necessarily, therefore, apply to both cases.

When the colonial subjects eventually rose in Africa against the imperialist powers exploiting them, declared socialists in the Western countries (in England, France and Holland, for example) failed paradoxically — given their theoretical espousal of the overthrow of exploitative oppressors — to identify in practice with the African revolutionaries. These socialists, of course, had by that time vested interests of their own to protect, earning as they did their living from the exploitation of the colonies and

still strongly believing in their "civilizing mission" toward the savage Africans. "Socialist" Great Britain today has all its workers screaming for the exclusion of non-whites inside the country and stanchly backing their government in its indirect and vicious support for their white brothers in Rhodesia.

The problem of racism, then, which is at the very bottom of Black oppression and segregation, is not equatable with that of the capitalist system. After all, there are many Blacks in this country who are members of the upper or middle classes but whose horizons, in terms of vertical and or horizontal mobility, are sealed because of color. It is race and not wealth which forces them to share camp with the rest of the Black population, and their fight is not that of "a classless society."

Afro-Americans are coming face to face with the fact that the GOP and Democratic parties have also



# MARXISM and the BLACK REVOLUTION

by Wanyandey Songha

**"Marx's brand of revolutionary was one pitched  
in a fight against property owners of  
his own race."**

failed to offer them answers to their problems, and that they lack a genuine party to carry forward their manifesto. Recently it appeared as though the Black Panthers, given time and allowing for mistakes and the might of the enemy, might fill the gap in all-Black politics. But this hope is fading fast as these brothers increasingly consider themselves integrated revolutionaries dauntlessly following the footsteps of Marx, waging their war against capitalism as a system. They have, as many before them, embraced the notion that there exists an international revolutionary regardless of race. They argue, as Cleaver answered Carmichael, that empty stomachs know no race. Tantamount to saying that the oppression of Blacks is an artificial coincidence and not racial, this stand can only serve, at best, as a fallacious apology for racism. If and when the white Appalachians staged a revolution, they would wipe out classes and

become ordinary equal whiteys. But there is nothing to indicate that their Black comrades would pull the same luck given their pigmentation.

There seems to be very little difference if any between the "revolutionary integrationist" approach of the Panthers and the integrationist call of the NAACP. Black people are again losing their Black personality, Black identity, Black goals and demands and are now combining them with those of whitey in the vain hope that regardless of race they are bedfellows. That is sheer defeatism, copping out. There is nothing in SDS or the other white radical groups that would neatly define and give life to Blackness.

In the spring of 1965, this writer shared the challenges confronting SNCC in the South, and by coincidence was under the field directorship of Bro Carmichael. It is at that time that the relevance of whites (whose only reason for coming South was sympathy) was debated night

in/night out in a dilapidated building somewhere in Wilcox county. As their ideas matured, SNCC eventually removed whites from its operations. Today it seems that history is repeating itself, with the young idealistic white Northerners seeing another chance to invade and take over Black organizations. And there is no one who stands a better chance to destroy a Black revolutionary group than a white romanticist revolutionary.

History has taught us that there are two different causes of classes in a given society -- unequal wealth distribution, and racism. Marxists are only equipped to solve the first. The American case combines both, and Black revolutionaries, be they genuine or fake, must acknowledge this. The solution to Black problems must come from pure Black approach, and it seems to me that we had better achieve our maximum unity first as a group before we begin to dilly-dally with ideologies.



# Black Poetry Is

by Sidney Bernard

The cast was tossing poetry and not gasoline-filled bombs -- a case of Black Power in the shape of poetry power -- from the open stage of the Delacorte Theater in Central Park. The program was "An Evening of Negro Poetry and Folk Music" and it was long, often stirring and humor-filled. There was audience power, too, in the record crowd of over 3,000--with hundreds of non-ticket-holders bunched at the two end gates of the oatmeal-bowl playhouse. They were alert and talky as they waited for the eight o'clock go-ahead. Once inside some found what few unfilled seats there were, while others spilled into the aisles and made do with the low-slung wooden steps for seats. As good for viewing as the regular ones, though not as comfortable.

From the moment the eight actors and singers, plus the three musicians, made their entrance, there was a gut feeling that art--which on this night would consist mostly of traditional and modern poetry and song from the Afro-American repertoire -- was at least one equalizer in a Black-white storm of hurt passion, guilt and unappeased wrong. The tight-fitting audience, a good third of whom was nonwhite, was an audience not unaware of the embattled world outside the Delacorte's sylvan and peaceful setting. But so upbeat was the setting--with its flapping Elizabethan flags on the rooftop, its fine darkling symmetry of open sky and glade and pond and trees, playhouse stuck in among them--that one could hear not a murmur of discord.

The performers came on almost in a lope. Roscoe Lee Browne, director of the program, who played a kind of Leporello kibitzer to the cast's Don, led off with a wry crack or two about the weather--the political weather, that is. He introduced the cast, each of whom bowed and then sat, all forming a kind of musical chairs effect across the stage, with Browne seated a little forward from the others. They were: Amanda Ambrose,

slim and regal looking, in white linen gown; Leon Bibb, trim and ready as a welterweight, wearing a dark blue suit; Gloria Foster, handsome and womanly, in turquoise dress; Moses Gunn, also in blue suit, flecks of gray showing in neatly-groomed, short beard; Ellen Holly, youthful and pretty, dressed in black; Josephine Premice, who gave off glints of both the clown, and sophisticate; and Cicely Tyson, restless and fine-boned, smooth as beaver in body-hugging green. And the trio of musicians -- Bill Lee, bass; Stuart Scharf, guitar; and Floyd Williams, tympani--who sat a little above and behind the cast, on stage left.

It was a long but never tiring program--an absorbing mixture of protest, ghetto laughter, remembrance and some rousing take-offs on white song. Amanda Ambrose got things going with her camp version of the Irish toora-loora lullaby; then came a more somber note with Cicely Tyson's reading of Paul Lawrence Dunbar's "We Wear the Mask" ("With torn and bleeding hearts we smile"). Leon Bibb was at his very best in several folk songs--among them were the traditional "Buked and Scorned" and his starkly beautiful rendering of "O' Shenandoah." Moses Gunn's voice and presence were by turns commanding and bitingly pithy--in readings from poets Robert Hayden, Arna Bontemps, Ray Durem and others. Josephine Premice untorched the traditional "Careless Love" torch song--she belted it across with a kind of warmed-over night club sogginess that made the audience howl. Gloria Foster and Ellen Holly were in fine contrast--the former strong and clear, and the latter softly silken, in both solo and duo readings. Roscoe Lee Browne was at all times himself--as anchor and performer he moved, read his lines and ad-libbed with wit and professionalism. And with a voice of pure fright -- as in his reading of

a lynch scene from the works of Richard Wright. The musicians were effective in their background roles--in the background, but hardly invisible.

There were two sets, upwards of thirty pieces of poetry and song in each, with a short intermission in between. Among the other poets represented were: James Weldon Johnson, Langston Hughes, Gwendolyn Brooks, Calvin Hernton, Helene Johnson, LeRoi Jones, Countee Cullen, Myron O'Higgins and Ted Jones. Almost three hours of the sweet, tart and burning essences of a people's art, performed on a mild summer's night. During those hours, it was as if Watts and Newark and Detroit had never happened. Just a bad American nightmare. And during those hours one was reminded of Joe Louis's (remember Joe, that "credit to his race"?) famous crack on the eve of a fight, when he said of an opponent, "He can run, but he can't hide." Backlash whitey can run, but he can't hide, from the humanity of Black poetry.

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WHY ARE YOU BUGGING ME WITH THE PROBLEM?

# Book Review

by RON WELBURN

**BLACK EXPRESSION**, edited by Addison Gayle, Jr. New York: Weybright & Talley, 1969. 394 pp. \$4.95

The mention of the word "criticism" makes us shudder. No wonder. Since most of our critics have been white, we usually imagine critics as weak-eyed palefaces with brown teeth sitting amidst countless unread manuscripts and cigarette butts. But regardless of who they have been, critics and criticism are here to stay. For Black literature, critical evaluation by Blacks is an imperative.

As a result of the Harlem movement, we did begin to get down to some serious discussions of our literature, our music and the visual arts, mainly in order to protect those arts of ours which were being exploited while we were kept backstage. A vanguard of intellectuals wrote extensively about what we were doing when the interest in "things Negro" drove everyone to the pages of *Crisis* and *Opportunity*. But during and after World War II, our evaluations decreased noticeably.

To prove that Blacks have not ignored a commitment to critical writing, Addison Gayle has edited an anthology of essays "by and about Black Americans in the Creative Arts." *Black Expression* is an impressive compendium of our critical efforts since the 20's, and a valuable touchstone towards the fulfillment of Afro-American literary history and criticism.

Gayle's preface is directed toward the academic community, which has never taken Black people seriously -- in anything, creative or otherwise. Besides pointing out that our literature needs its own critics, he says: "In the America of today, renowned ... for its great criticism, Negro critics have died the death of public and academic anonymity." Why? Because "his (the Black critic's) is

the predominant voice in American criticism which calls upon the Black writer to dedicate himself to the proposition that literature is a moral force for change as well as an aesthetic creation. In so doing, he risks not only continued invisibility, but denigrating charges that he does not know enough, coupled with insistent attacks upon his credentials as a critic." Charges which we see most often coming, piously, from such white "experts" on Black as Robert Bone of Columbia University.

Gayle's introductory remarks and some of the other essays contain references to "the greats" in British literature. Some of us may not be interested in his use of Shakespeare, Samuel Johnson, Keats, or Shelley, and may challenge him for using them to impress his colleagues in the English department. But we might overlook his intentions. Our most perceptive critics in the past referred to these men and doing so can be justified in the proper historical context. One of the problems Black literature confronts in the quest for a definite ethos is the use of suitable literary models, and this becomes a ticklish situation since our writers from Phillis Wheatley to Ralph Ellison and beyond have respected British, Russian, and white American writers. Surely the Bones are pleased with this, but it might disconcert them to know that the writers in *Black Expression* are in quest of a tradition which is founded on what our own writers, poets, dramatists, and musicians have handed down to us. And they will have to get their hats when we refer to Afro-Asian literature as a basis for our revitalized literary tradition. Today especially, the Julian Mayfields and Willie Kgositsiles know there is nothing in the mainstream for us.

This book, as a part of the current

gushing forth of old wine into new bottles, is an *engage* gesture by publishers to close the credibility gap. *Black Expression* will make the student's work easier for him if pertinent issues of Black journals are unavailable, and it will also appeal to those who prefer to study in luxury -- everything at the fingertips.

But if we want anything of immediate critical value and for posterity we'll have to go out and get it. What *Black Expression's* writers have had to say about our creative work, from Du Bois and Alain Locke to Toni Cade and David Henderson, can be expanded upon indefinitely. There is a tremendous task ahead of us. The literary essay by itself is, right now, not substantial enough for the needs of critical evaluation. More extensive studies -- ones that can project at length a mixed bag of goal-oriented ideas -- should be done. We have the materials; some of the best insights over a period of forty-five years are contained in this very collection.

The vanguard of Locke, Brawley, Brown, Ford, and Hughes, all represented in this anthology, have not found any committed Blacks to follow in their footsteps in over twenty years. Rev. Nathan Scott of the Chicago School of Divinity has published several books on modern existential literature, and his perceptive "Dark and Haunted Tower of Richard Wright" is a pleasant surprise. Scott ought to do more work on the home front whether we choose to challenge his ideas or not.

Langston Hughes stated quite frankly in 1926 a love and satisfaction for our creative abilities. So, an essay like Hoyt Fuller's "Toward a Black Aesthetic" should be used as a prelude to his own contribution to the efforts of his critical precursors.

These things will come.



By CLAYTON RILEY

## A Black Quartet

Consider for a moment, for an extended moment structured for the spirit, for all levels of madness and energy, consider with a pleasure long muted by the nation's paltry Christian ethic -- protectful and emasculating -- consider for a moment the destruction of America.

Really. I mean, without jivin', think about it. Imagine New York City, for example, lighting up the sky with flames, blinking eerie orange light all the way to Passaic, crumbling, falling like an enormous, sizzling mass of ashes crashing, sinking into rivers...the Atlantic Ocean bubbling, overheated for the first time in history...the population kept alive to witness the end of the city's institutionalized penchant for murder, all that dying by all those people whose lives this great, moon-walking nation cannot maintain, whose right to live cannot be assured.

Ritual fires to end all that. The Empire State Building as a mass of rubble, beautiful smouldering ruin on evacuated Fifth Avenue...Lincoln Center glowing crimson as a burned coal -- all human life around it spared, with cocker spaniels left to their own devices...

"The West is dying," says one Brother, "as it must, as it should." Right on. Thus, we reach a point in our times when, in a reflection of larger spiritual bankruptcies, the American theater chooses to prance naked before the world of its drooling audiences, finalizing the suspicion that these performing "arts" emanate from a forum that has nothing to say. Unable to play for us (in any meaningful sense -- what, after all, does the sight of a body imply?) the theater decides to play with itself, jerking off artistically, emotionally,

culturally, any way you like because there is no one, nowhere, nothing this side of money that can be worshipped.

The Blacks enter, prepared to honor the wonder of their lives; they are cocksure (and strong) and speak to what has been salvaged in a continuing struggle...address a people's survival, encourage the demise of dead forms and actions...shouting a new life into choked channels of expression...celebrating the end of useless disciplines, blowing hard riffs of renaissance with strong lungs filling legend and fable-bound horns. Black hands caress the bass that thumps of rich/warm issues of the heart, Blood reigns...and Black hands bring rhythm back from secret caves of a drum's darkness, provoking crystal showers out of golden cymbals -- *ta-ta ting, ta-ta ting*...Black pianos screaming crazy in the middle of all shadows, tickled ivories awaken sleeping hearts, finger tips trip lightly toward melody and remembrance. Such things as may save us, move us away from dying (there is no death we have not experienced), such music as Langston Hughes must have known.

"I am the singer and the song."  
Right on.

More music in *A Black Quartet*: the work of Ben Caldwell, Ron Milner, Ed Bullins and LeRoi Jones; Brothers who come to play, who arrive to take care of business, show up to kick literary ass...to cook, to burn, shake us/wake us...all right.

Ben Caldwell starting the evening with a curtain-raiser (a hell-raiser, really) called *Prayer Meeting, or The First Militant Minister*. Caldwell's solo wants us to know, dig it, that men of the cloth have got to stop shucking, start being real because

the people cannot live by tarry service alone...see? So when this burglar dude breaks into this preacher's crib, and later confronts him with "God's" voice ("What do you mean, who's there? Who the hell was you talkin' to? Didn't you expect to get an answer?"), when he tells "Rev" to get off his knees, rise up and face the Man...that, Brother, is about changing the social order, about seeking viable alternatives and all that -- taking a hammer to Uncle Sam's treasure chest of locked-up goodies. Yes, it is. Sweet, sharp construction and commentary by the playwright...jive director bringing death on the number, failing to illuminate the form: a satirical thrust of generous proportion, a recognition that a minister is not so much the enemy as he is the enemy's unwitting agent, that he is laughable and, in theatrical terms, an absurd extension of our own former loyalty to a currently disdained theology.

Here is a caricature and a broad one, calling forth all remembered forms of raging humor...a thief quick enough to "become" God under pressure -- now that is funny, baby. But not if the laughter is squeezed out of it by portrayals that are too seriously performed, too grim and too heavy. Irving Vincent staged the piece and blew. L. Errol Jaye and Carl Boissiere are the minister and the burglar respectively. This is the piano...a light run filled with brief but special riches.

Ron Milner's *The Warning* -- *A Theme for Linda* is a sax, warm notes, a lush lyricism locked into cadences from Aretha...deep rhythms, all these beautiful words, so well designed, finding expression in the phrases of blues people, real people -- gathered recollections by Black women broken by the things Black

cont next pg



men have given them to remember. Linda, learning who she is in a kitchen wrecked beyond rats or roaches, smashed into the debris of anguished memory and dreams: men on the run, on the bottle, needles in their clouded futures...all this. The play comes dangerously close to being a matriarch's high mass; men throughout are maligned by description or destroyed by characterization. The strong sense of crushed but maintained manhood that prevails in Milner's *Who's Got His Own*, for example, is, for the most part, absent here. But Milner's writing contains such magnificent and expanding rhythms, his use of language is so superbly precise in the landscapes he explores that one is hard-pressed to quarrel with his thematic choices.

*The Warning* is further enriched by Joan Pryor's performance as Linda's mother. In its brief duration, Sister Pryor's portrait of a defeated Black woman is more brilliant, more moving than I can possibly tell you -- she must be seen to be fully appreciated. Sitting, nursing one glass of beer after another, remembering her men with a sorrow that overrides any anger she might possess, the Sister offers a characterization so filled with compassion and grace, an effort filled with such informed and enlightened playing that it virtually carries the night.

Jimmy Hayson works extremely well as an old man intent on molesting the young girl who was Linda. Woodie King, Jr. directed, handling the work imaginatively and exploring its dramatic values with abundant skill.

Ed Bullins, like the bass, rumbles ominously with the *The Gentleman Caller*, Bullins in a minor key...not bad, but not all that we have come

to expect from him. "Whitey" theatrically crucified along with his overdressed talkative lady...cliches for days...we have been here before, know where the Brother is coming from...the lady spouting historical homage to her traditions, dying at the maid's hand, while silently, the Black gentleman caller looks on, crushed at his discovery that the Establishment prize he covets is not genuine.

Allie Woods directs in a clever and zestful fashion that clearly is the evening's outstanding effort in this area. He manages to expand Bullins' casual and atypically loose work into a bizarre, excitingly visual experience.

Allie Woods...bravo! And also for Sister Sylvia Soares for a magnificent, silver-painted portrayal of the rich white matron.

LeRoi Jones goes beyond...I mean, just goes beyond, you see. His creative brilliance is, in fact, a matter of public record that all too regularly goes unacknowledged.

Dig him here, with *Great Goodness of Life (A Coon Show)*, a drum solo, something like Max Roach deciding to chase negroes out of St. Albans and New Rochelle with a steady machine gun sound, a rim shot, relentless in its controlled fury... *clack, clack, clack...*

Court Royal, the hero, is the man Americans are talking about in Glen Cove, and Great Neck, Englewood or Park Slope when they say, "Mr. Royal is one of the nicest colored men I've ever met. Too bad they can't all behave like him."

Court Royal, accused by the voice of America's high white court, can snap back, "You've got the wrongman. I work in the Post Office." Which is all he thinks necessary to say. And, in a way, it is. 'Cause

we know about that Post Office scene, don't we? Have always known about it, too.

"I'm a supervisor," Court Royal informs us. "You've probably seen me in there." Hey, America. Have you seen Court Royal in the P.O., lately? He's the Black man who's been there forever, cashing in his life for respectability, breaking his back and his heart in order that all occupants of the White House and the local police precincts will love him dearly.

"...the nicest colored man...."

And, in the end, Court Royal takes a jeweled pistol containing a silver bullet, and at the behest of the established and establishing "order" fires straight into the heart of the young, accused fellow the Man has had tied to a stake before us. The young man dies, calling out, "Papal!"

Ah, yes...we do know.

As Court Royal, the very model of a responsible negro, L. Errol Jaye is a disappointment. He works within a very limited framework (as he does in the first two plays), is always the same character in terms of his dramatic choices. He selects -- in almost every instance of his playing -- the most common, indeed, the easiest route through the text. Generally, this is the safest route as well, and Brother Jaye's work seldom seems to tax his imagination so much as his physical energies; he shouts and muscled his way through material that should be handled much more subtly.

Beyond all that, however, *A Black Quartet* is a dynamite set that is written and played for...YOU.

So, don't treat yourself bad, baby. Go and see. Go and bear witness or go and scream.

But go.



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